

RESETTING THE TERMINATOR

John Connor's belief that "the future is not set" enabled the writers and producers of *Terminator Genisys* to create an entirely new timeline.

It's been six years since the last Terminator film, *Salvation*, polarised fans of the franchise. Now, in a cinematic climate where everything old is new again, the Terminator has been upgraded, with Arnold Schwarzenegger slipping comfortably back into his cyborg's skin for *Terminator Genisys*.

The creative force behind the Terminator's return began with producers David Ellison and Dana Goldberg, who were both longtime fans of James Cameron's Terminator films.

"When it was announced that The Terminator rights were going to be available, we were obviously interested," says Goldberg. "The first two Terminators, in particular, are movies David and I revere. The idea of resetting Terminator for both the audiences that loved the originals and a whole new audience was an opportunity we couldn't pass up."

To devise a new direction to take the franchise, the producers approached screenwriters Laeta Kalogridis and Patrick Lussier, who initially turned them down. "We said no because of respect for James Cameron's universe," Kalogridis explains. But after consulting with Cameron, the director gave the pair his permission and blessing on the proviso that they "write a good part for Arnold".

The writers' approach was to revisit the world and characters established in the first two Terminator films in a present day setting... and beyond.

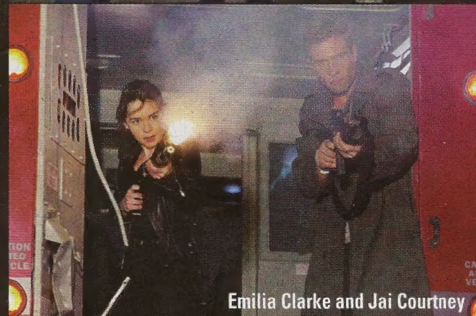
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"Time travel is embedded in the DNA of the material, which gives rise to the possibility of alternate universes and different timelines without affecting the original material at all," Kalogridis notes. "Those stories exist and continue to exist, they have still happened, but you can tell a different story that branches off in a different direction using the characters that all of us love."

The digital revolution and advancements in AI since the Terminator first arrived on



Arnold Schwarzenegger on set with director Alan Taylor



Emilia Clarke and Jai Courtney

screens in 1984 allowed the writers to logically upgrade the concept for today's hi-tech world. Skynet is now a global operating system known as Genisys, which is set to go online in 2017. "To me, science fiction is at its most effective when it's actually taking real world events and placing them in a fictional setting," notes David Ellison.

Ellison insists that *Terminator Genisys* is not a remake, reboot or sequel. "It's really a reimagining based on the Cameron source material," he explains. "Viewers don't have to be familiar with any of the previous films at all – this is definitely a stand alone. But that being said, for the fans who have seen the first couple of films, there are some great Easter eggs in there. Exploiting the inherent nature of time travel, we go off on a different timeline to take these characters that audiences and I grew up with in a completely new direction." **S**

• *Terminator Genisys* is out on October 29